

FOOD, HUNGER, POVERTY AND FAMINE IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA:

The Inhuman Faces Of Failed Development

By Reginald Herbold Green

Sweet and cloying through the dark air
Falls the stifling scent of despair;
The forms take shape in the dark air:
Puss-purr of leopard, footfall of padding bear
Palm-pat of nodding ape, square hyena waiting
For laughter, laughter, laughter. The Lords of hell
are here.

- T. S. Eliot

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Alive.

- UNICEF African Poster 1985

Do not go gentle into that good night...
But rage rage against the dying of the light.

- Dylan Thomas

...the present emergency in Africa not... a short-term crisis brought on by any one exceptional circumstance but rather as a surfacing of a long term crisis of poverty and underdevelopment. ...malnutrition and ill health... claim the lives of nearly four million African children each and every year - even when there is no drought, no famine, no camps, no epidemics, and no media coverage. This is the 'silent emergency' which, exacerbated by war and drought, has suddenly become the 'loud emergency' of which all the world has heard.

- James Grant, Executive Director
UNICEF, 1985

Frustrations and failures will continue to mount if we do not immediately summon the courage to revise the ways we think and take action - as well as maintaining essential services to support life and health. ...Saving hundreds of thousands... who are at risk of dying from malnutrition or infection is an immediate imperative. But it must be only one stage in the progress toward other activities, and one element in the truly comprehensive approach...

- Cheikh Hamidou Kane, Minister
for Planning and Cooperation of
Senegal, President, Environment
and Development in the Third
World (ENDA), 1985

The Loud Emergency

The predominant public image of sub-Saharan Africa in the North today is that of a starving child starkly portrayed on a television screen. For the professional economist it is probably a statistical series which - with a few short deviations - trends steadily down. For the recurrent concerned professional visitor it is the growing number of cases in which present reality in luxury hotels, urban slums and rural areas looks starkly worse than his stored up images of ten or even twenty to twenty five years ago and contrast even more starkly with remembered high points of the middle or late 1970s.

Over 1976-79 sub-Saharan Africa had recovered from the 1973-75 economic shocks associated with grain, oil and industrial economy manufactured goods price explosions. Growth averaged over 5% a year - comparable to the developing country average and above any previous four year run in SSA. Even the external balance position (buoyed in many cases by a beverage price boom) and the food supply situation (bolstered by relatively good weather, lower grain import prices and more forex to spend) looked moderately good in a majority of countries.

Beneath this apparently benign surface three time-bombs were ticking:

1. African trend food output growth had been below that of population since the middle or late 1960s and had not responded to sharp terms of trade shifts in grower prices in favour of food over other agricultural products and - in a majority of cases - also relative to wages and cost of living;
2. the apparent balance of payments stability was an illusion resting on a temporary terms of trade recovery (which in fact did not include mineral export based economies) and on acceleration of borrowing on worsening terms at a period of above average export earnings growth;
3. the "silent emergency" of endemic hunger and malnutrition, grinding poverty and sickness, overwork and avoidable death remained the reality confronting millions of Africans who remained in absolute poverty and very vulnerable to any downward shock pushes.

By 1984 the panorama had changed totally. The silent emergency had risen to a

screaming crescendo. Per capita output had fallen in each year from 1980 and in respect to economies with a majority of SSA's population was back to or beneath 1970s levels.

External balance - rent by sudden terms of trade collapse and an extended recession at global economic level and weighed down by rising interest and repayments charges against static or falling real grant and loan inflows - was for most countries a fading memory not a realistic short term goal much less a present reality. The continuing trend decline in per capita food production had been starkly highlighted by drought and civil war/external aggression.¹

Famine stalked a quarter of the continent and severe hunger over a half. Quality of life indicators showed a stark reality of human misery for SSA as a whole. For the most severely affected countries like Ghana a long term downward trend (Table 1) had become apparent.

The emergency efforts to avoid mass death did and do relate to an immediate overriding necessity. For the dead there is no future. By themselves they do not answer what one is keeping people alive for in the sense of what they will be able to make of their lives.

Mass starvation in Sub-Saharan Africa to date has been triggered by the interaction of drought, weak transport systems and war (and threatened, albeit to date averted, when the first two interacted particularly savagely but the third was absent). But it has been triggered both because the margin between 'normal' food supply and starvation is narrow, and increasingly narrowing in a majority of the region's countries, and because most poor households have neither the self employment nor wage employment opportunity either to grow enough to eat or to be productive and well rewarded enough to buy adequate food. In normal years inability to buy food - not its physical unavailability - is the main cause of urban malnutrition (cf Reutlinger, 1985). That reality underlies the famine crises and remains even when reasonable rains return (see Please, 1985 and Green, 1985b; Figure 1, Table 2) - as they did in most, not all, drought affected areas in the 1984-85 cropping seasons. Furthermore, peasants who have lost herds, tools, seed and other means of farming, especially if also driven from their homes into urban areas or relief camps by the search for food cannot resume production as if nothing had happened. Flight from the land will be both difficult and slow to reverse (cf Burki, 1985).

TABLE 1
SELECTED QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS:
1960 - MID 1980's

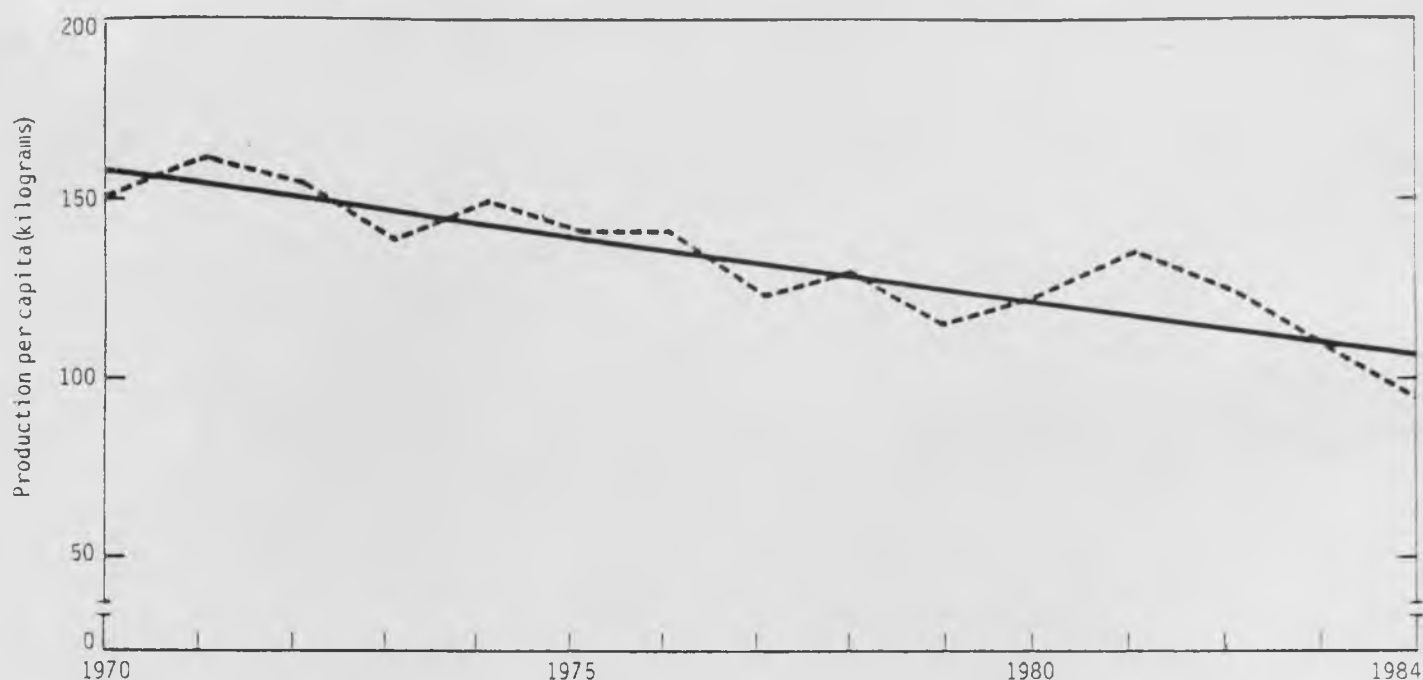
	Ghana		Late	1980's	Low Income Sub- Saharan Africa (1982)
	1960	1970	1970's		
1. Average Life Expectancy at Birth	45	49	55	53	48
2. Infant Mortality Rate	132	107	86	107-120	118
3. Child Death Rate	27	21	15	25-30	24
4. Access to Health Facility (b)	-	-	-	30	45
5. Public Health Facility Visits Per Person Per Year	-	-	0.7	0.4	2(f)
6. Health Budget as % of GDP	-	1.2	-	0.26	0.95
7. Access to Pure Water (c)					
Rural	-	14	14	48	14
Urban	-	86	86	75	62
Total	-	35	35	60	22
8. Access to Excreta Disposal (d)					
Rural	-	40	40	30	25
Urban	-	92	95	65	69
Total	-	55	56	44	32
9. Average Calorie Avail- ability as a % of requirements	92	97	88	68	91
10. Child Malnutrition (Moderate/Severe)	-	-	36	50-55	40
11. Primary Education Enrolment Ratio (e)	38(46)	64(75)	69(80)	-(80)	69(-)
12. Adult Literacy	27	30	-	35-45	44
13. Education Budget as % of GDP	-	3.9	-	0.85	2.81
14. Proportion of Population below Absolute Poverty Line (f)					
Rural	-	-	60-65	67-1/2- 72-1/2	65
Urban	-	-	30-35	45-50	35

Table 1 (continued)

Principal Sources: World Bank, Comparative Analysis and Data Division, Economic Analysis and Projections Department (June 1984), World Development Report 1985; UNICEF, Statistics on Children in UNICEF Assisted Countries (April 1985); UNICEF Ghana: Situation Analysis of Women and Children (July 1984); Ghana country data.

- Notes:
- a) 1960 data refer to a year between 1959 and 1961; 1970 between 1969 and 1971; late 1970's between 1975 and 1980; 1980's to 1982, 1984 or 1985.
 - b) Defined in terms of location within a 5 kilometre radius. May overstate for urban population when facilities available are small to serve the entire population nominally within reach of them.
 - c) 1970 and late 1970's urban figures may be overstated by failing to relate number of water points to population.
 - d) 1970 and 1978 figures for urban and possibly rural areas overstate by failing to relate number of drop-holes to supposed user population.
 - e) Adjusted for length of primary cycle. () are unadjusted figures. Because of the primary/middle school division Ghana has a shorter primary cycle than most SSA countries.
 - f) Estimate made by author on basis of fragmentary data.

Figure 1 Grain production per capita in 24 African countries affected by drought, 1970-1984



Source: World Bank, *Toward Sustained Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Joint Program of Action* (Washington, D.C., 1984), p. 14; based on data of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), except that the 1984 figure is a projection using data from FAO, the United States Agency for International Development and the United States Department of Agriculture.

TABLE 2 PRODUCTION AND IMPORTS OF CEREALS IN AFRICA

(million tonnes)

	Africa				Sub-Saharan Africa ⁽¹⁾	
	1970	1975	1980	1983	1969-71	1980-82
PRODUCTION						
Total Cereals	61.1	67.5	70.8	62.7	35.6	41.8
— Wheat	8.0	9.7	8.9	9.0	1.2	1.4
— Rice	7.3	7.8	8.4	8.6	4.7	6.2
— Maize	21.7	24.9	27.2	22.4	12.1	13.8
Food Production per capita (index: 1976=100)	104	100	95	88	—	—
IMPORTS ⁽²⁾						
Total Cereals		13.1	22.0	25.9	2.3	8.7
— Wheat		10.4	15.7	17.4	1.0	3.3
— Rice		0.7	2.4	3.2	0.7	2.5
— Maize		1.4	3.4	4.5	0.4	1.7
IMPORTS AS A PER CENT OF REQUIREMENTS ⁽³⁾						
Total Cereals		16.3	23.7	29.2	6.2	17.2
— Wheat		51.7	63.8	65.9	45.6	70.5
— Rice		8.2	22.2	27.1	12.6	28.2
— Maize		5.3	11.1	16.7	3.1	10.9

(1) Average annual volume.

(2) Imports for total Africa are higher than for sub-Saharan Africa reflecting the impact of certain north African countries which are substantial cereal importers (e.g. Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia).

(3) Requirements are here defined as production plus imports.

Sources: FAO—Production Yearbook, 1976, 1981, 1983.

FAO—Trade Yearbook, 1976, 1981, 1983.

World Bank—Towards Sustained Development in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1984.

Table 2 - Reproduced from P. Ndegwa and A. Fenwick, *Food Crisis In Africa: Policy And Research Issues*, February 1986, IFPRI Board Paper, Nairobi.

With the exception of countries plagued by civil war (Chad, Ethiopia, Sudan) or external aggression (Angola, Mozambique) mass deaths from starvation were averted even when (as in, e.g. Mali and Burkina Faso) food output was very hard hit indeed and transport infrastructure and fleets exiguous in the extreme. In 1985 GDP growth was of the order of 3.4% - in excess of population growth for the first time since 1979 and the external balance gap was distinctly lower. 1986 may well be similar or better. A return to 1976-79? A turning point?

Hardly. Over half of the 1985 growth appears to have come from agricultural recovery out of an extremely poor 1984 trough with both trough and recovery largely explicable in terms of weather. Per capita food availability (averaged over SSA) is still barely above 90% of FAO norms - radically less for at least a third of SSA's countries and human beings. That kind of recovery will last as long as the good weather years and if mistaken for a true trend shift will lay the foundation for a yet louder emergency when the drought returns. 1986's out-turn will be buoyed by continued favourable weather and except for oil exporters (Angola, Cameroon, Gabon and Nigeria) by the dramatic fall in oil prices.

The balance of this study first reviews the history of poverty in Africa from the pre-colonial context through the apparent breakthrough to development in the 1960s and 1976-79 to the post 1979 crisis. Special attention is focused on the impact of the present crises on poor human beings. The relationship of emergency survival aid to rehabilitation support is reviewed as are a series of themes for including structural adjustment away from hunger and poverty in a production and balance oriented structural adjustment strategy.

The basic analytical arguments underlying the study are:

1. hunger and poverty have remained intractable in SSA for centuries but have altered radically in form and since 1979 increased in degree;
2. the basic cause is production growth failure in agriculture generally compounded by import capacity and real income falls outside agriculture;
3. therefore, redistribution without enhanced production (including raising relative prices of agricultural products without significant increases in

production possibilities) cannot be adequate;

4. because who produces dominates distribution for poor Africans to have greater access to food they must produce more (more food for the rural majority of the undernourished, more income to buy food for the urban poor);
5. more production by Africans is feasible and in many cases at lower scarce resource (including foreign exchange, fixed capital and skilled managerial personnel) costs than by large farmers or farming corporations (public or private). Knowledge (or its absence) and political inertia or self-interest hamper shifts in that direction but do not necessarily prevent them;
6. These factors also apply to "loud emergencies" - the severely drought affected people and countries need first to survive and at the same time to be assisted in rehabilitating production;
7. the necessity for African leadership (and perhaps rather less, less sweepingly global and less pre-emptory external 'advice') and effort is real (as Africans have recognised) but without initial increases in net resources inflows to break import strangulation nooses the probable results of African efforts will not be adequate to reverse 1979-85 trends generally let alone in respect to food production and hunger.

Transitions From Poverty To Poverty

Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa is an historic fact - as it is virtually universally. There was no golden age before the Europeans came when the land flowed with sorghum, millet and yams, with guinea fowl, cattle and fish, with palm oil, groundnuts and garden eggs, with banana beer, coconut spirits and palm wine so that all were well fed and prosperous. But it would be equally false to treat poverty as primordial, unchanging and - implicitly - permanently immutable and inevitable.

Pre-colonial poverty turned primarily on sub-marginal or erratic rainfall and on technological (and therefore productivity) limitations in relation to

Sub-Saharan Africa's, on average poor and difficult soils. The human condition was equally constrained by inadequate health knowledge, practices and services which shortened life and eroded strength. Africans, not Europeans, have always been the chief victims of African diseases and so-called adult African resistance to, for example, malaria often means no more (and no less) than that vulnerable individuals died of it as children.

None of this denies that Africans did develop technologies: some long fallow rotation systems (so-called "shifting cultivation") related admirably and sustainably to poor soils with limited, uncertain rainfall so long as populations were small and the only large demand on the land was for food; some herbal and para-psychological medical practices were far more than common sense or trial and error. Still less does it deny cultural and social achievements. The fact remains that for many Africans hunger was an annual occurrence, disease a frequent one, life short, and death an ever present danger unleashable by unpredictable and technologically unmanageable weather shifts and disease outbreaks.

Pre-colonial neo-colonialism - of slave traders and merchants manipulating African politics and agents in ways analagous to those used by external governments and companies in post colonial neo-colonialism a century later - unleashed two additional causes of poverty and human misery. The first was the slave trade and the social and economic wastelands it created (still writ plain in the low present population of most of Nigeria's middle belt almost a century after that trade ceased). The second was the rise in the number and ferocity of wars - and the killing power available to armies - largely directly or indirectly triggered and/or made possible by European and, secondarily, Arabian interventions (see Rodney, 1972).

Colonial Political Economy And African Poverty

Colonialism in Africa rarely meant territorial economic development even in modern macro economic terms. Gross territorial product - as opposed to certain products of use to the colonising power and its trading partners - was rarely of central concern. James Mill's definition of a colony as a place in which the colonising power found it convenient to carry out some of its business (e.g. mining, cutting tropical timber, buying or growing tropical

crops) provides much more insight into the nature of economic policy than any definition presupposing colonies were seen primarily as territorial economic units in their own right.²

As a direct result, poverty of Africans was not an economic concern which could appear on the colonial agenda as more than a footnote. A large export sector with a supporting food and service sector could on occasion reduce poverty - a result not unwelcome to many colonial administrators. Avoiding mass starvation (by price juggling, reserve holding, famine relief and even food for work policies which have a haunting familiarity of kind if not scale to 1970s and 1980s efforts) were sometimes priorities - e.g. in the then Tanganyika Mandate - and did end mass starvation. But Adam Smith's dictum on the need for the majority to be non-poor and non-miserable as a pre-condition for colonial economic success would have been either incomprehensible or seen as at least as subversive as the writings of Karl Marx.³

Education for Africans was perceived either as a by-product of missionary endeavour (vaguely backed, tolerated or curtailed in terms of its supposed social and political impact - which was usually far more and far more deeply 'subversive' than colonial administrators, or missionaries!, realised) or as an investment in clerks, semi-skilled labour and other human intermediate inputs into the colonial economy. The calculations were not in sophisticated econometric terms, but colonial education policy was early (and severely cost constrained) human resource development school in concept - even when it flowered to secondary and medical assistant levels. Health facilities for Africans (and until late in the colonial period often for Europeans⁴) were even more exiguous and dependent on missionary subsidisation of the colonial state.

However, the nature of poverty changed. Colonial rule did reduce death from war (caused by dislocation and subsequent starvation or epidemic disease more than by battle casualties); it did end the slave trade; frequently it did provide fail-safe famine relief against mass starvation. These shifts probably both increased life expectancy and (by reducing dislocation) raised rates of increase of food production. Exploitative as it was, colonial production promotion/coercion on average probably raised the command of many African households over goods and services. While there were exceptions (especially in the case of settler colonies), the territories in which most

Africans were most likely to be poor and miserable were those like then Haute Volta in which, a la Joan Robinson's formulation, the colonial power and its enterprises could find no worthwhile way of exploiting them.

Poverty - or at least human deprivation - was also altered in its nature in additional ways. The first was the imposition of external rule with its impact on polity, society, self image and self set standards - clearly a negative shift. The second was the beginnings of education and health services which both improved the human condition of recipients and gave them - and other Africans - a fuller picture of what they were (for whatever reason) still deprived of (a much greater force in both aspects with the late colonial education and health services 'boom'). The third was an increase in population growth (presumably related to the indirect effects of law and order including famine relief and ability to produce more) which began to create pressure on land of plausible quality and security of rainfall (most severely where colonists or plantations had reduced the supply available). This trend was probably not very significant in most areas at the time but laid the foundations for much more generalised and severe problems over the last twenty years.

1960-1979: Development by Modernisation, Poverty By Inertia and Invisibility

Development - or at least growth and expansion of both production and basic services - speeded up in the region as a whole and in most Sub-Saharan economies over the two decades after independence. The dominant basic pattern was arguably a more intensive colonial mise en valeur emphasis on modernisation and expansion of selected output sub-sectors and related infrastructure, paralleled by more intensive and extensive human resource investment oriented education, and rather more attention to health and water supply. However at least one sectoral addition - import substitution industry, one sub-sectoral shift - toward high capital intensity irrigated and mechanised agriculture and one perspective shift - to see an African state as a self contained unit for policy purposes (not an appendage of a broader unit centred abroad) were increasingly evident over time.

Output per capita and service provision coverage did rise (see World Bank, 1981). The advance was uneven - the least favoured countries in natural resource or location terms and those with chronic policy failures did not

share significantly in it - slow and unstable, but real. Ironically on average the best four years were 1976-79, the recovery following the 1973-75 shocks and preceeding the 1980-1985 debacle.

Poverty defined as low income household ability to meet basic consumption needs was neither rapidly nor consistently reduced. The basic cause was a failure of wages and reasonably productive self employment to rise much - if at all - more rapidly than population plus a failure of productivity increases to become accessible to the poorest quarter to half of peasant households. Basic service accessibility did rise, albeit often so slowly that absolute numbers without access rose even though a growing share of the people was served.

While mass starvation was - with very rare exceptions - averted, it is doubtful that seasonal, cyclical and endemic hunger were reduced markedly. From about 1965 on food, and from 1970 overall, agricultural production growth lagged behind that of population - a source of subsequent immiseration on three counts: increasing inability to meet domestic food requirements from domestic production; falling per household cash income from sale of food or other crops; and falling export earnings and therefore ability to sustain overall capacity utilisation and maintenance or growth in the early and middle 1970s and more especially since 1979.

The reasons for agricultural malaise are complex, are not clearly understood (especially in terms of weight and interaction) and until the 1980s had very distinct divergences from country to country. In respect to poor farmers three stand out: concentration of resources in ways which left the small, isolated farmer with a low initial income unable to raise output; increasing population/land ratios and static proven knowledge (and access to inputs), leading to smaller holdings, more intensive land use unsustainable under existing systems, pushing on to poorer and or higher weather-risk land. As these households usually produce primarily domestic food crops (with sales for cash a deduction from what are often already at least marginally inadequate self provisioning) and effective domestic food prices after 1960 did not in general show a cyclical fall relative to wages, there is some doubt how significant peasant/worker terms of trade shifts and state price policy (rarely effective for domestic food crops) were directly, except for the minority who produced export crops which clearly did suffer from world and domestic terms of trade shifts and increases in (public and also private)

marketing costs relative to export prices.

While still a small proportion of total absolutely poor households, urban poverty (in low productivity informal sector self or wage employment) began to grow very rapidly. Whether the urban absolutely poor households were much less poor than the poorest half of peasant households in physical consuming power terms⁵ is unclear and probably varied sharply among countries. What they did have was somewhat better access to basic services and a far higher chance - at least for some - to win their way out of absolute poverty than that of most of the poorer half of peasant households.

In the 1970s concern about low growth of employment and of rural household incomes led to a substantial employment, technology, urban renewal and rural development studies industry and some pilot projects,⁶ most to fall victim to post 1979 increases in resource stringency. Likewise concern over low food production growth led to increased real resource (including infrastructural investment and marketing working capital), institutional and policy attention to this sub-sector often with renewed concentration of attention away from poor households and in most cases with no very evident net positive impact on production.⁷ Finally the late 1960s/early 1970s falling off of growth and the negative 1974-75 growth during the first external shock crises led (during the 1976-79 high growth period) to a set of studies which formed the basis of the new conventional wisdom on stabilisation and structural adjustment appearing as they did after the 1960-1979 development dynamic had gone into reverse in almost all of Sub-Saharan Africa.

1979 - 19???: The Resurgence of Poverty

Since 1979 the general performance of the region's economies has been disastrous (Tables 1,3). The combination of negative per capita physical output growth, falling external terms of trade and declining net external resource inflows (absolutely as well as per capita) have reduced real per capita command over resources to below 1970 levels for Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.⁸ The World Bank's optimistic projections suggest no regional real output per capita recovery over 1985-95 and possibly some further deterioration on net per capita inflows and terms of trade (World Bank, 1984).

Table 3 Basic Indicators

	Population (millions) mid-1982	Area (thousands of square kilometers)	GNP per capita ^a		Average annual rate of inflation (percent)		Life expectancy at birth (years) 1982	Index of food production per capita (1969-71 = 100) average for 1980-82
			Dollars 1982	Average annual growth rate (percent) 1960-82 ^b				
					1960-70	1970-82 ^c		
Low-income economies	213.5 t	12,992 t	249 w	0.7 w	2.6 m	10.8 m	49 w	86 w
<i>Low-income semiarid</i>	<i>29.3 t</i>	<i>4,714 t</i>	<i>218 w</i>	<i>-0.1 w</i>	<i>3.4 m</i>	<i>9.8 m</i>	<i>44 w</i>	<i>85 w</i>
1 Chad	4.6	1,284	80	-2.8	4.6	7.8	44	95
2 Mali	7.1	1,240	180	1.6	5.0	9.8	45	83
3 Burkina Faso	6.5	274	210	1.1	1.3	9.7	44	95
4 Somalia	4.5	638	290	-0.1	4.5	12.6	39	60
5 Niger	5.9	1,267	310	-1.5	2.1	12.1	45	88
6 Gambia, The	0.7	11	360	2.5	2.2	9.7	36	74
<i>Low-income other</i>	<i>184.2 t</i>	<i>8,278 t</i>	<i>254 w</i>	<i>0.9 w</i>	<i>2.6 m</i>	<i>11.7 m</i>	<i>49 w</i>	<i>86 w</i>
7 Ethiopia	32.9	1,222	140	1.4	2.1	4.0	47	82
8 Guinea-Bissau	0.8	36	170	-1.7		7.1	38	88
9 Zaire	30.7	2,345	190	-0.3	29.9	35.3	50	87
10 Malawi	6.5	118	210	2.6	2.4	9.5	44	99
11 Uganda	13.5	236	230	-1.1	3.2	47.4	47	86
12 Rwanda	5.5	26	260	1.7	13.1	13.4	46	105
13 Burundi	4.3	28	280	2.5	2.8	12.5	47	96
14 Tanzania	19.8	945	280	1.9	1.8	11.9	52	88
15 Benin	3.7	113	310	0.6	1.9	9.6	48	100
16 Central African Rep.	2.4	623	310	0.6	4.1	12.6	48	104
17 Guinea	5.7	246	310	1.5	1.5	3.3	38	89
18 Madagascar	9.2	587	320	-0.5	3.2	11.5	48	94
19 Togo	2.8	57	340	2.3	1.3	8.8	47	89
20 Ghana	12.2	239	360	-1.3	7.5	39.5	55	72
21 Kenya	18.1	583	390	2.8	1.6	10.1	57	88
22 Sierra Leone	3.2	72	390	0.9		12.2	38	81
23 Mozambique	12.9	802					51	68
Middle-income oil importers	56.1 t	5,959 t	634 w	0.9 w	2.4 m	11.4 m	49 w	91 w
24 Sudan	20.2	2,506	440	-0.4	3.9	15.2	47	87
25 Mauritania	1.6	1,031	470	1.4	2.1	8.7	45	73
26 Liberia	2.0	111	490	0.9	1.9	8.5	54	88
27 Senegal	6.0	196	490	(.)	1.8	7.9	44	93
28 Lesotho	1.4	30	510	6.5	2.7	11.4	53	84
29 Zambia	6.0	753	640	-0.1	7.6	8.7	51	87
30 Zimbabwe	7.5	391	850	1.5	1.1	8.4	56	87
31 Botswana	0.9	600	900	6.8	2.4	11.5	60	73
32 Swaziland	0.7	17	940	4.2	2.4	12.8	54	107
33 Ivory Coast	8.9	322	950	2.1	2.8	12.4	47	107
34 Mauritius	0.9	2	1,240	2.1	2.2	15.0	66	110
Middle-income oil exporters	110.3 t	3,256 t	889 w	3.2 w	4.5 m	12.6 m	50 w	92 w
35 Nigeria	90.6	924	860	3.3	4.0	14.4	50	92
36 Cameroon	9.3	475	890	2.6	4.2	10.7	53	102
37 Congo, People's Rep.	1.7	342	1,180	2.7	4.7	10.8	60	81
38 Gabon	0.7	268	4,000	4.4	5.4	19.5	49	93
39 Angola	8.0	1,247					43	77
Sub-Saharan Africa	380.0 t	22,207 t	491 w	1.5 w	2.7 m	11.4 m	49 w	88 w
All low-income countries	2,266.5 t	29,097 t	280 t	3.0 w	3.2 m	11.5 m	59 w	110 w
All lower middle-income countries	669.6 t	20,952 t	840 w	3.2 w	2.9 m	11.7 m	56 w	108 w
All upper middle-income countries	488.7 t	22,079 t	2,490 w	4.1 w	3.0 m	16.4 m	65 w	115 w
Industrial market economies	722.9 t	30,935 t	11,070 w	3.3 w	4.3 m	9.9 m	75 w	114 w

Note: For data comparability and coverage see the technical notes.

a. See the technical notes.

b. Because data for the early 1960s are not always available, figures in italics are for periods other than that specified.

c. Figures in italics are for 1970-81, not 1970-82.

Source: The World Bank, Toward Sustained Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Joint Program of Action, 1984.

On what has caused this massive shift of direction there is substantial agreement that external shocks (including weather), narrow margins for riding them out and the cumulative impact of over a decade and a half of agricultural non-success were major factors (see Wheeler 1984 for an econometric analysis). There is also agreement that government policies were not optimal (not that they had been over 1960-79 either) and were adjusted to contextual disasters too slowly and that for some polities civil war/state disintegration and/or external aggression, which - e.g. - cost the nine SADCC states about \$10,000 million over 1980/84 or well over total external resource inflows for the period, (SADCC, 1985) were also decisive causes. The specific weights of particular causes (and especially their interaction and their applicability to specific countries) are not agreed (see Allison and Green, 1985 and sources at note 2) nor are the directions in which policies erred (as opposed to fairly pervasive overambition in scope and underperformance in practice).

The impact of economic contraction on poor people has not been analysed consistently, comprehensively nor coherently. For this there are at least four reasons:

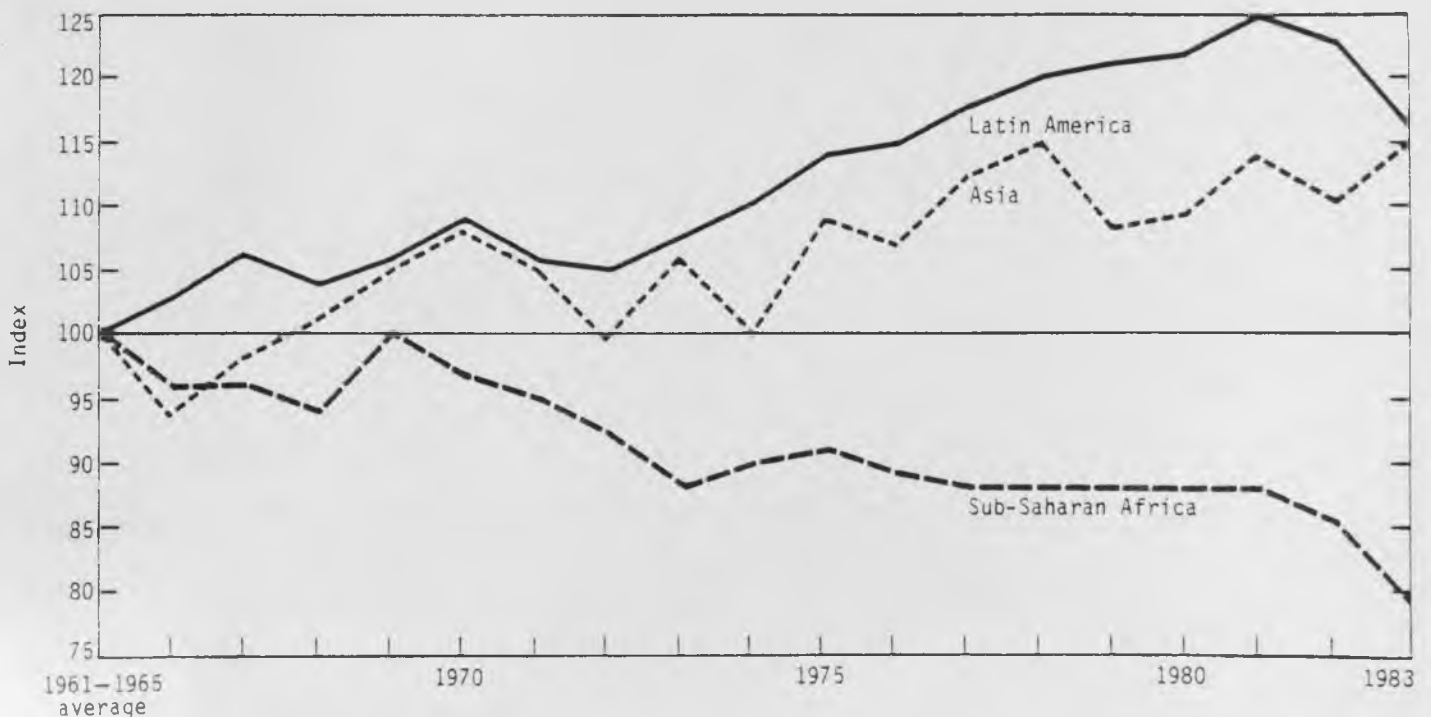
1. social and human condition indicators are not as widely, uniformly, regularly or carefully estimated as more narrowly economic ones so that data is usually fragmentary, of doubtful inter temporal or intra country comparability and even less accurate than that in macro economic estimates;
2. structural changes - e.g. the apparent rise in the proportion of secondary and informal incomes especially among the urban poor⁹ - have not been mapped empirically rendering many indicators either dated or based on implausible assumptions;
3. there is a lag between economic contraction and clear downturns in some indicators - especially those (e.g. education, health) where quality may fall drastically while quantity is still rising - and a further lag until data are collected - published - analysed (e.g. infant mortality estimates based on intercensal comparisons then to be up to a decade behind current reality and to mask shifts in trend between censuses);
4. overriding macro economic and human survival (anti-starvation) - and in

some cases state survival - concerns have pushed analysis of, as well as action on, human condition indicators into the background. Indeed when it is felt that nothing can be done to halt their decline (or that economic recovery is both necessary and sufficient for reversing that decline) there is a distinct desire 'not to know'.

Thus in 1984 UNICEF's Impact Of World Recession On Children was able to produce a broad array of suggestive and scattered empirical data but not a set of statistics comparable to those in the World Bank's annual World Development Reports. This was especially true for Sub-Saharan Africa (see Singer and Green, 1984). The annual Statistics On Children In UNICEF Assisted Countries (UNICEF, 1985) illustrates the fragmentary nature of relevant data (and the three year time lag for attaining even moderately incomplete global coverage).

Figure 2 Index of food production per capita, 1961-1965—1983

(1961-1965 average = 100)



Source. World Bank, *Toward Sustained Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Joint Program of Action* (Washington, D C., 1984), p. 15; based on data provided by the United States Department of Agriculture.

But a number of main topographical elements of the development of poverty can be drawn. Food production per capita is still declining secularly - and in the early 1980s was severely cyclically affected by a drought belt extending from the Cape Verdes through the Sahel to the Sudan and down through the Horn and East Africa to the Cape and back to the Atlantic coasts of Namibia and Angola. The officially estimated ratio of average calorie availability relative to basic requirements fell to 80 per cent in many cases and under 70 per cent in some - a chilling figure when one realises that it means that at least half the human beings in these countries have still less food than that.¹⁰ What micro data exist suggest that the farmers hardest hit fall into several sub-groups:

- a. victims of sustained drought and/or ecological degradation whose previous sources of income (including herds, seed stock, land improvements) have been wiped out;
- b. the - usually poor, often female headed - households pushed by land hunger onto more marginal (in terms of soil, weather, ecological fragility) land - i.e. the pioneers of the 'rural sponge' effect which has to date limited the rise of open unemployment;
- c. households in isolated or peripheral (to main urban centres) areas who tend to be physically and institutionally (including for private enterprise) at the end of the line for all goods and services and to suffer first and most severely from decreased flow levels;
- d. small producers - usually primarily engaged in self provisioning but also selling food, even if in nutritional terms they have a deficit,¹¹ because it is their basic source of cash income - who are unable to increase or even sustain output in the face of static applicable knowledge and declining access to inputs.

Effective food prices have risen relative to wages and usually to prices but for the groups cited this does little or no good because of stagnant or falling output. Non-food crop prices have tended to fall in real terms - often dramatically - partly relating to terms of trade internationally, partly to currency overvaluation and partly to rising marketing costs. This has probably affected poor peasants less severely for two reasons: many non-food

crop producers are not among the poorest peasant households; and switches from non-food to food crops by poor peasant households have been particularly marked (at least in some areas). However, there are poor peasant households presently or formerly primarily dependent on non-food crops for cash income who have been severely affected including (e.g. in Northern and Upper Ghana) by having to sell more of their already inadequate food production.

Formal recorded wage employment in the region as a whole has been nearly static since 1979. Meanwhile real wages have fallen sharply - often to the point at which second and third incomes are essential to household survival. As open unemployment is not common - only those who are not absolutely poor or can depend on relatives can afford to be unemployed - this implies a rapid growth in informal sector self and non-recorded wage employment. Here too there was clearly a 'sponge effect' in the 1970s, but one which appears to be running into productivity and market limits in the 1980s at least for most young, uneducated and female informal sector members.

Public service provision has fallen. The basic reasons are budgetary stringency (with falls in real expenditure levels on health, education and water common and draconic ones not uncommon) and foreign exchange shortages (leading to missing drugs, pump spares, textbooks, transport, etc). In some cases quantity of services has fallen markedly - e.g. rural health in Zambia and Ghana. In more, quality has declined, e.g. generalised shortages of school and medical service materials and maintenance. Supply and/or useability of nominally available services is severely constrained (e.g. on average 25 per cent of rural water supply units in Tanzania are out of service at any one time because of missing spares or fuel).

The decline in services has pressed particularly hard on end of the line areas - isolated rural districts and urban slums - and on those with rapidly growing populations, again especially urban slums but also some resettlement schemes. Or, more accurately, it has pressed particularly heavily on the poor people living in them. The rise of private primary schools and clinics in poor urban areas does indeed indicate that poor Africans value these services but also that the state supplied ones are less and less available and/or more and more unsatisfactory.

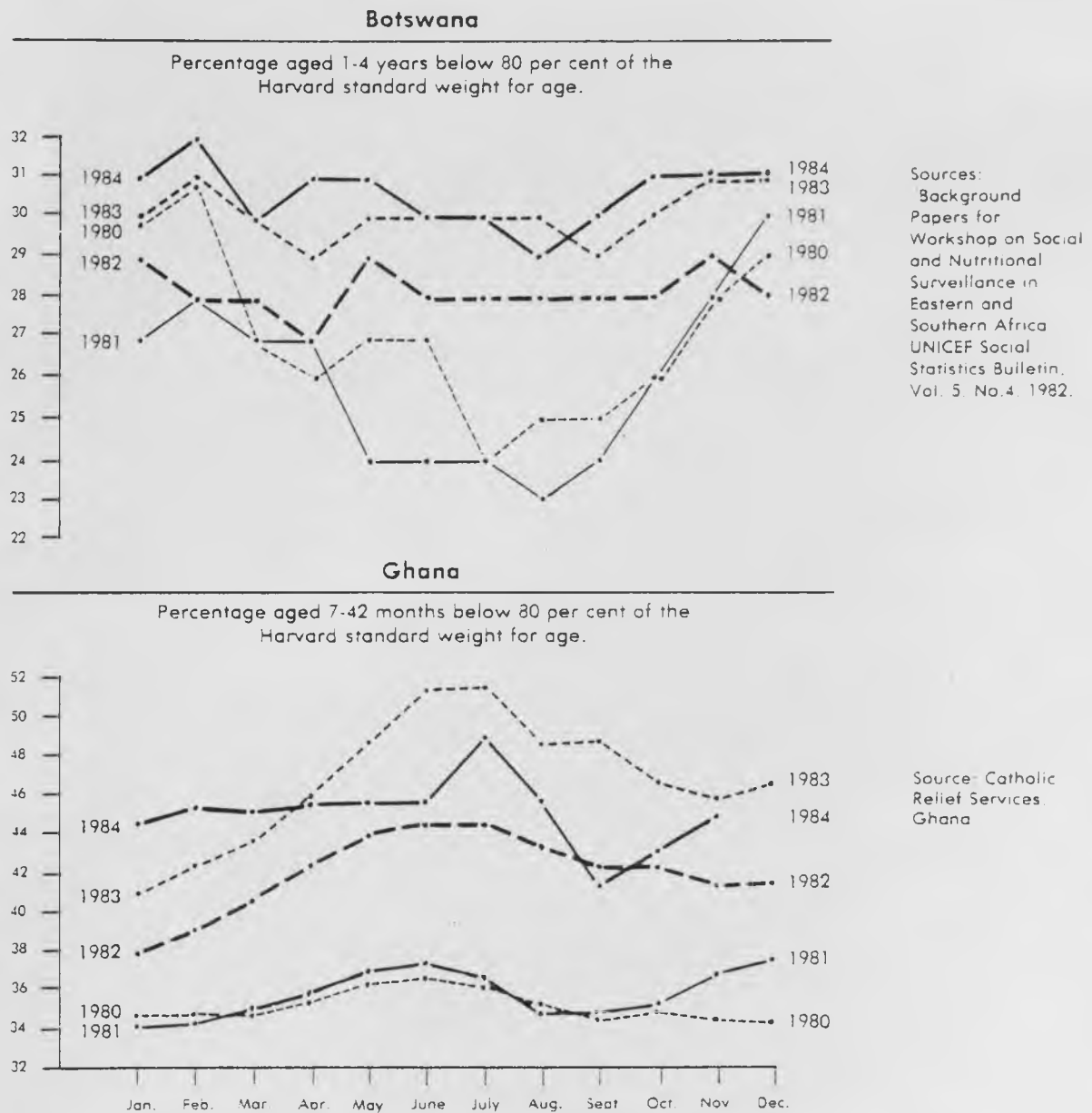
Raising or reintroducing fees for basic services has had a negative effect on

access of the poor to health and education, but how much is unclear. This is true because there is no uniform pattern of fee levels (in some cases they are probably progressive relative to income but not in others), waiver possibilities and collection levels and because their supposed use to restore or sustain service levels is not to date very evident.

The most recent life expectancy and mortality data suggest that the health service cuts may - in several cases - have halted or reversed the slow improvement of life expectancy and decline of infant mortality trends which characterised Sub-Saharan Africa over 1960-79. More dramatically diseases nearly eradicated in the late 1950s and 1960s (e.g. yaws and yellow fever in Ghana) have erupted at epidemic levels and remained endemic because funds and transport limited counter campaign duration and coverage. Moderate and severe child malnutrition has reached levels of 30 per cent or above in most countries for which data exist and is approaching 50 per cent in some even excluding famine crisis years (UNICEF, 1985 and selected UNICEF country situation reports).

Figure 3

MALNUTRITION AMONG CHILDREN IN BOTSWANA AND GHANA 1980-84



Source: UNICEF, Adjustment With A Human Face, 1985.

Erosion of Security: Extension of Poverty

Meanwhile traditional security systems have been eroded - probably a trend well established in the 1960-79 period but much more nakedly evident since. Kinship and locality or origin groups are less able to support poor members/relatives - especially in urban and natural (or other) disaster stricken rural areas. This is not simply a result of shifts toward less extended families and urban residence, relevant as these are. With economic contraction fewer and fewer group members have resources (especially of cash or food) to spare - all boats are sinking lower. Similarly higher cost, less available transport reduces urban/rural kin and migrant contacts. Reciprocal exchange - food for manufactures - has probably risen, but this is not an avenue accessible to the very poor. To exchange one must have something above day to day subsistence (including the cost of a trip) to start.

The pattern and balance of absolute poverty have continued to shift. The worst declines - excluding drought/war related famines - appear to have been among urban poor (including for the first time a high proportion of recorded wage employees). In consuming power terms they are now clearly worse off than the majority of peasants and their former advantages in respect to access to basic services and to chances of advancing to higher real incomes are increasingly exiguous. Rural absolute poverty has grown unevenly with the general rule of thumb being that households in peripheral areas - geographically, politically, in absolute agricultural potential or in perceived¹² commercialised production - have fared worse on production and service access quite apart from being particularly prone to drought and civil government collapse/war debacles.

It is still true that the majority of Sub-Saharan Africa's poorest of the poor are in refugee camps and peripheral rural areas but there is now a rapidly growing urban household category which is almost equally immiserised. In most of the region's economies the net resource flow - at existing prices - is urban to rural, as much in states with an urban as in the minority with a rural policy bias. Oddly the clearest exceptions are two Stabilisation/Structural Adjustment cases, Ghana and Uganda, which are almost alone in having very high export crop taxes. In respect to non-food crops it can be claimed that price distortions hide a true rural to urban flow but with both the trend and the post 1979 realignment of food crop prices in favour of

producers over wage earners it is hard to argue the same for that sub-sector. This does not, however, mean equal access to basic services for rural areas because state revenues from rural households and producers are much lower than from mineral and urban so that expenditure proportional to revenue results in substantially higher per capita spending and service provision in urban areas (and for both rural and urban elites).

Table 1 set out the present levels of several Human Condition or Quality of Life indicators for Low Income Sub-Saharan Africa as of 1982 and their evolution in Ghana over 1960-84. The absolute levels are appalling enough but their Ghanaian evolution is even more dispiriting. Moderately rapid real gains in the 1960s slowed down in the 1970s and have now gone into reverse. Two immediate basic causal inadequacies stand out - food production and the budgetary base for health and education. While Ghana's period of economic unsuccess dates to the early 1960s, not 1979, the record of change on the Human Condition front does not appear atypical. What was hard won over two decades has been undermined, eroded and threatened with being totally swept away in seven years. The stifling scent of despair is there - not universally, not unconditionally but widely and increasingly.

Within African Reach?

Twenty five years in Sub-Saharan Africa much of it grappling with poverty issues should not - and for the author do not - lead either to any belief that there are simple answers nor that answers appropriate to one country at one time are easily generalisable or sustainable. The particular programmatic analysis of basic needs and employment oriented approaches in the 1970s was never widely accepted in or outside Africa and on reflection this contributor would be inclined to say it somewhat differently. In any case those programmes were within a resource availability context which is gone - it would be most unwise for anybody to be disposed to try to repeat them, unchanged. On the other hand their stress on the centrality of more production by poor households and more priority to basic services for production as well as for distribution and human welfare reasons was a basic rediscovery which, having been lost, needs to be won back. And won back in a form in which programme articulation for urgent implementation can be begun - no matter how unpropitious the context may seem.

The need for such emergency action is in fact agreed in principle and in practice as - at a more speculative and non time targeted level - is that for basic service restoration, making possible increased production by poor peasants and, perhaps, enhancing opportunities for informal sector employment and productivity advances. However the longer term goals are often seen as after the crisis and after structural adjustment; the emergency actions tend to be episodic and case by case; the two phases are not articulated and programmed as a sequential whole and both sets of exercises are treated as parallel to (at worst as Christmas tree ornaments on) production and balance focused macro and sectoral structural adjustment. That is simply not good enough, intellectually or operationally.

Emergency action is essential because people are dying but also because ecological, production and basic service delivery system damage once sustained is very hard to reverse and, until reversed, will continue to cost lives. The most obvious emergency support measures are food aid and interim basic medical care against killing diseases and health conditions. These programmes are essential. UNICEF's African poster with the question and answer bracketing the face of a young girl - 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' 'Alive' - sets the initial challenge starkly but realistically.

Continuity From Loud Emergency To Rehabilitation

However, emergency action in Sub-Saharan Africa will both need to be continued (not necessarily in the same areas) for a decade or more and to be seen as an initial phase of a broader struggle to reduce vulnerability and poverty by creating survival security structures based in Africa and involving poor Africans as producers and subjects not receivers and objects. This perspective has several implications for emergency programmes:

- a. the question - after survival, what next? - should be posed from the start because of its implications for emergency programming. For example food aid so delivered as to allow peasants to remain in their homes, maintain their social units and prepare for the return of the rains is much more conducive to making survival the first step to self rehabilitation than food aid in mass camps of dislocated, totally

dependent refugees;

- b. similarly the same question implies that - e.g. - rural emergency food provision needs to be linked with the inputs (seed, tools, transport home, etc.) required for an economically wiped out household to begin to produce again;
- c. in parallel, attempts to meet emergency health needs should go beyond specific injections - e.g. immunisation/vaccination campaigns and oral rehydration - to selective support for keeping a basic health service functioning, as illustrated by the UNICEF/Danida basic rural drug provision programme in Tanzania and the UNICEF inputs into selected primary health care posts in Ghana;
- d. and utilise emergency inputs - where possible without delay or sclerotic bureaucratisation - to increase productive and basic service capacity and provide a capacity for self respect and dignity to participants (no longer pure recipients or 'targets'), e.g. Zimbabwe's rural public works scheme including agricultural infrastructure focused food (or cash to buy food) for work projects;
- e. while involving recipients as participants in programme operation and - to the extent practicable - coverage and design.

None of these steps is impossible. The usual argument that in an emergency there is no time to take them implies that emergencies are few and far between, unforeseen and not susceptible to identifying overall guidelines for broader (as well as for food distribution or vaccination campaign) approaches.

That is nonsense. Emergency efforts have been needed frequently and repeatedly in Sub-Saharan Africa for over a decade. They will continue to be needed. The points outlined above are fairly commonly relevant to articulating programmes. African governments, international agencies, bilateral aid bodies and voluntary organisations can and should plan ahead both as to basic capacity to finance or collect more resources and as to basic programme designs and checklists. Combined with better early warning systems on food supply and health situation deterioration - and less unwillingness to believe and act on the data until people are visibly dying or on the verge of

dying from starvation or epidemics - such an approach could both increase the human survival results of emergency programmes and make them infinitely more effective as first steps toward rehabilitation/self rehabilitation of recipients/participants.

Such an approach to emergency (human survival) programming has definite implications for longer term strategies and possibilities for reducing absolute poverty and absolute lack of access to basic services. First, if emergency assistance is to encompass initial rehabilitation it both should and can be seen within the context of longer term employment - food production - basic service - poverty reduction strategies both as an initial stage and also as a supporting measure to prevent their crippling or destruction when these strategies already existed before the emergency. Second, such a perspective suggests that the relatively watertight compartmentalisation of emergency assistance from development assistance is counter-productive for both and requires critical reassessment and 'structural adjustment'. Third, viewed in this way even emergency, human survival programmes are (or can be) relevant to sustaining and restoring human resources and production and therefore integral to, not an unwelcome diversion from, structural adjustment (cf Reutlinger, 1985).

And A Return Toward Development

Full articulation of longer term strategies is beyond the scope of this essay. However, some areas for attention can be flagposted.

First, the production/productivity focus of the present World Bank structural adjustment approach is crucial. Production is important. Production by poor people is a priority in, not a substitute for, raising production.

Second, the achievement of less severe external imbalance by a combination of higher exports, genuine import substitution and more concessional resource transfers is also necessary. Structural adjustment and growth of output are, at least in Sub-Saharan Africa, totally inconsistent with neo-autarchy. Import strangulation is a fact weighing heavily on poor people in at least half of the region. The true dialogue is on the nature of relationships to the world economy, balance of instruments, phasing and practicable timing.

Third, unless government fiscal and monetary imbalances - and continuous resultant pressures for cuts - can be reduced, the chances of providing basic production support (extension, research, infrastructure, credit) and basic services to small peasant and/or non-agricultural informal sub-sectors are negligible. Prudent fiscal and monetary management is as integral to 'economic adjustment with a human face' (c.f. UNICEF, 1985:64ff) as to any other variant of adjustment.

Fourth, because government resources (financial, human, physical, foreign exchange) are limited, priorities - i.e. choices as to what not to do as well as what is to be done - are necessary. For example if primary health care is to be expanded to universal access in Sub-Saharan Africa, then its share of health resources relative to limited access, high unit cost curative treatment must be expanded which may require absolute cuts in the latter. Similarly if production enhancement by low income peasant farmers is a priority then the research, extension, input supply and other requirements to make such an increase possible must be made available even though this means reducing allocations to large scale, mechanised, import intensive farming (an alteration of balance likely to have positive production and external balance as well as poverty reduction results).

Up to this point what is proposed is not simply consistent with, but based on the same priority themes as, conventional World Bank structural adjustment strategy and programming. At least at applied level (possibly not at philosophical) the differences are secondary. Production growth plus manageable external and public finance balances are virtually always necessary conditions for significant improvement of the incomes and lives of poor people. However, they are rarely sufficient conditions. Therefore, a number of additional guideposts are needed.

Food: Production And Access

Fifth, increased food availability to poor people is a central goal (cf Bank, 1986). Given the external balance position, in all but a handful of cases, this means either enhanced production or balanced regional trade expansion. Food availability to the majority of ill nourished Africans who are members of

poor peasant households, requires that they be enabled to produce more (cf Burki, 1985; Bank, 1986). This is economically feasible - indeed much more cost efficient than most large scale agricultural programmes (Livingstone 1985) - and in the present food crises context probably politically and intellectually feasible as well. The problem is partly technical - articulating contextually relevant programmes based on collecting reasonably accurate data and testing/adapting new techniques for application. It is also partly institutional and partly resource management - actually giving priority to hoes and field testing, effective extension and availability of seasonal inputs on time.¹³ None of these technical and institutional problems are inherently any harder to solve than those of other agricultural production promotion strategies. Similar considerations apply to enhancing poor peasant cash income which in most cases will come primarily from achieving a genuine food surplus above household self provisioning requirements. This is not to argue against increasing non-food crop production for industrial inputs (e.g. cotton) and for export. Sub-Saharan Africa's problem is one of low agricultural growth not substitution of non-food for food crops.

Sixth, effective food availability for poor urban (or other non-agricultural) households turns on price/income relationships. Attempts to hold food prices down by squeezing growers are counter-productive (especially if growers are actually squeezed, less so if they simply use parallel markets) because they reduce supply and either result in higher effective prices to low income consumers or in unmanageable import and subsidy bills. Higher rural productivity and larger supplies are much more likely to reduce real urban food prices. Therefore, the concentration must be on raising incomes through more, and more productive¹⁴, employment/self employment. How to do so is the basic question and one needing data (on what is produced how and on what the actual income sources of low income Sub-Saharan African households are as well as on technical and institutional production/employment/productivity possibilities), plus a coherent approach (not treating 'appropriate technology' or 'the informal sector' as isolated, homogenous artifacts which they are not) linked to a systematic attempt to treat employment/distribution and production/productivity issues as joint goals and programming exercises, not separate or alternative ones.

The World Employment Programme and subsequent African basic needs mission studies do provide a foundation for devising contextual approaches on these

lines. The main obstacles - once better data bases are built - would appear to be political (the urban poor in Sub-Saharan Africa are neither represented in enough governing sub-class coalitions nor enough of a threat to their survival to receive priority attention in many countries) and intellectual (the depth and extent of urban poverty is still not fully comprehended, the limits of modernisation approaches are only beginning to be perceived, the somewhat faddy, sloppy and romantic approaches of some "intermediate technology" and "informal sector" true believers have created a climate of scepticism). The key crisis forcing rethinking is the growing realisation that with 3 per cent to 4 per cent annual economically active population growth to the end of the century, employment growth outside peasant agriculture and the large scale, capital intensive enterprise sector is essential. Enhanced productivity and greater production on the one hand give the possibility of having effective urban consumer access to food and basic consumer goods and on the other rural producer access to basic consumer goods and agricultural inputs. Both non-agricultural workers and peasants need to become less poor and to have incentives for raising productivity (and working longer) to raise marketed output of goods and services.

Seventh, raising peasant productivity in the short term is likely to be possible primarily through increasing availability of proven, desired inputs - e.g. improved seed, hand tools, in some cases fertilisers and pesticides, improving transport - processing - storage capacity, reducing delays in payment to and distance from marketing point for peasants and increased rural and small town availability of goods (largely basic consumer, construction materials, agricultural inputs and tools) peasant want to buy ("incentive goods"). Knowledge to achieve major production breakthroughs is on a broad front not available today (Lipton 1985; Burki 1985). However, because the presently available gains are short to medium term and research takes time to yield results, it is critical that priority be given to retargeted applied and adaptive research regionally, nationally and sub-nationally linked to International Crops Research Institute (ICRISAT) member and related institutional basic research. Potentially useable basic research has not - with limited, scattered exceptions - been field tested and adapted by ecological zone, analysed in terms of its economic viability to users (especially peasant users) nor examined to ascertain its useability ("user friendliness") by small farmers in general and the majority of them who are women in particular. These defects are particularly true of root crops,

traditional grains, and marginal (or sub-marginal) rainfall areas.

Eighth, universal access to basic services (health, education, water and production support such as research and extension related to the two preceeding priorities) within a finite time period (even if that must be up to twenty or twenty five years) needs to be seen as an anti-poverty, food production, productive employment and human condition priority. Poor people, especially women and indigenous minorities, do benefit disproportionately from broadening access because when access is constricted they are the ones excluded. Literacy, nutrition, health and reduction of time spent collecting water are critical to enhancing the ability to work harder and more productively now and over time.¹⁵ To articulate such priorities into costed, sustainable programmatic form is not impossible if: a.) non-essentials are cut out (e.g. via basic drug lists); b.) there is a real priority in personnel and policy allocation given to doing so. The obstacles are - especially for health and water - intellectual and political. Low cost/universal access services are only now building up a cadre of professionals, a body of literature and a degree of respectability even remotely resembling that behind 'state of the art' approaches whose costs are such as to render them largely non-functional or practical only on a limited access basis in Sub-Saharan Africa. Piped water to houses and high quality curative medicine do appeal directly to political decision takers and civil servants (who use and - reasonably enough - want to have them). The balance in the intellectual dialogue is shifting toward low cost/universal access; the political self interest obstacle is very real and often very intractable in most of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Protecting Vulnerable Groups and Ecologies

Ninth, basic survival and support mechanisms are needed because emergencies will continue to arise. People matter and the view of Nassau Senior that the Irish famine would not kill enough people to achieve adequate structural adjustment of population to land is not an acceptable political economic position today. Again there is a perfectly respectable production case - the reduction of dislocation caused by unforeseen and unprepared for emergencies could have a high payoff in reducing their immediate and subsequent negative impact on growth. The problem is in devising approaches which do meet

survival and preservation of self rehabilitation potential needs while being financially and institutionally feasible in specific Sub-Saharan African contexts.¹⁶ A crucial set relate to food (see Reutlinger, 1985; Bank, 1986). Pre planned food for work programmes (urban as well as rural) operating at some level continuously but capable of being stepped up nationally or locally when required are an example. So, where technically and financially feasible, are food reserves linked to minimum buying price safety nets for peasant producers in bumper crop years. Such an approach would also avert the danger of food aid so depressing domestic crop prices in good years as to reverse the production revival - a danger which is exacerbated by the long lag between need and supply of food aid usually resulting in large deliveries in the six months after domestic supplies have become adequate.¹⁷ A related approach applies to sub-marginal agricultural/pastoral area residents. Here production returns to combined input and emergency relief (including food for work) programmes may well be low and the potential for sustained productivity increases problematic. However, in practice there is often nowhere else the human beings in these areas can go. If any value is placed on their survival and welfare, cost efficient programmes to ensure it are needed. Economic growth alone cannot proceed fast enough to end chronic food insecurity for these people. Both because their lives do matter and because chronic food insecurity reduces their productivity yet further, specific interventions in their favour - including improving their production capacity, providing additional income generating possibilities (e.g. seasonal works programmes) and emergency food and production input distribution - are needed (cf Reutlinger, 1985).

Tenth, environmental and ecological protection should be rescued from its European/North American upper middle class origins and related to the struggle against poverty and for sustainable production. Need can be as damaging environmentally as greed but cannot be dealt with by the same instruments. E.g. deforestation (more accurately denudation by stripping all tree and bush cover) is disastrous in its impact on productivity and in its contribution to desertification (loosely defined), erosion and dust bowls. It also increases the burdens on women and girls (and reduces their ability to grow crops, attend school, secure medical attention, improve environmental sanitation). Tree planting (encouraged by extension services but basically carried out by rural residents and/or urban fuel oriented producer co-operatives) and alternative fuel development would appear to be the only practicable basic

answers¹⁸ even if both require time and patience to build up an adequate, self sustaining basis.

Given the interaction between growing pressure on the land and ecological degradation it is tempting to identify population policy as a central medium term way out of a crisis. This is almost certainly a mis-specification for two reasons:

First, no conceivable change in birth rates would relieve either the present overload on many fragile economies or the rise in would-be economically active populations to 2.000. For the human beings and the land, what is needed are sustainable land use measures backed by conservation and rehabilitation knowledge and resources.

Second, the historic evidence suggests that certain specific improvement in human conditions trigger falls in birth rates which then facilitate growth of per capita incomes and access to services rather than the birth rate falling first. The most common facilitating conditions appear to be falls in infant mortality and severe malnutrition and rises in perceived old age security nets and education levels (especially of women). Thus a number of the approaches proposed above can be seen as directed inter alia toward meeting preconditions for effective population policy. When they begin to be met response to family planning education and supporting services will rise and the slow buildup of use of the latter may well accelerate dramatically. Until then while building an understanding of national and - especially - household demographic realities and serving those wishing to plan their families is important it can neither greatly alter birth rates nor use large volumes of resources efficiently.

Resources: Finance, Participation, Accountability

Eleventh, budgetary balance should be restored primarily by increasing revenue not cutting services. In Sub-Saharan Africa, revenue to GDP ratios vary but some are almost incredibly low even for very low income countries. Universal access basic services cannot be provided primarily on a profit making basis both because large portions of them can operate only at a 'loss' and because external economies are large. Within revenue augmentation, attention should

be focused on selective (progressive to well above the poverty line) indirect taxes and on progressive direct taxes which are in practice at least mildly redistributive on both the revenue and - more particularly - the expenditure side. Fees on limited access, high cost services (e.g. household water connections, above average use household electricity and water bills, above average health facility space and diet provision, specialist medical treatment) are at least as justifiable on this basis as luxury consumer goods taxes and are often fairly easy and low cost to collect. Charges for basic services are more problematic. Unless a quick, effective waiver system at contact point can be devised and operated, poor people, and especially their children, will be excluded. If fees can be seen to relate to services (e.g. a biannual borehole overhaul fee raised communally and paid when - and if - the overhaul takes place; local contribution of agricultural work or food to allow a primary health care worker to do health work without destroying the family nutritional base) they can help mobilise resources, increase community support and reduce net central government cost. Otherwise they will be very unpopular in a context of fragile and often interrupted services. Large numbers of small charges have high collection costs - not least in skilled personnel time if, for example, nurses are expected to collect hundreds of small oral rehydration salts or vaccination fees as part of their daily work.¹⁹

Twelfth, without participation by poor people no anti-poverty programme will be fully successful even in material terms. The case for participation in production and resource mobilisation (e.g. self help inputs of labour, materials, even cash into basic service and infrastructure provision) is presumably self evident. What is less accepted is that poor people need to participate in programme design, ongoing management and monitoring/evaluation. The reasons are not romantic - poor people do have knowledge about their own needs and capabilities which experts do not; participation in production and 'takeup' of services is related to whether they do correspond and are responsive to users' needs and preferences; participation can create incentives for officials to be more responsive to poor people (a not inconsiderable factor in programme success however good or weak the initial design); self help resource mobilisation is practicable only if those who are to mobilise the resources believe their use is appropriate, for their benefit and at least partially under their control. The political and institutional obstacles to participation (and the real, if partial and limited, successes in overcoming them) do not need rehearsing and are not limited to Sub-Saharan

Africa. They need to be seen as conflicts to be contained, circumvented or overcome not as given and immutable barriers to action.

Participation - and accountability - pose special problems for external bodies including multilateral, bilateral and voluntary aid or development agencies. This is true even when they are intellectually committed to participation and to accountability to intended beneficiaries. First, almost by definition their personnel are 'outsiders' usually with fairly brief country experience and broad perception gaps or distance from host government officials and intellectuals let alone African peasants, urban slum dwellers, women and children. Second, their structures of accountability run (usually hierarchically) through their own institution to its policy makers and those to whom it is accountable, not to host governments and through them to ordinary Africans much less directly to the latter. In a sense these tensions are not fully soluble (barring participatory, accountable, effective world government which, however desirable, cannot reasonably be posed as a side condition for the struggle against poverty in Africa). However, posing them and facing them squarely is potentially a necessary first step toward reducing tensions to manageable levels, improving host-agency relationships and to avoiding the escalation of tensions into antagonistic contradictions and the deterioration of dialogue into accusatory rhetoric.

External Involvement And Support

Thirteenth, while any strategy for overcoming poverty must be based on the actions of poor people and poor countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, if it is to have a real chance of sustainable success, external support is critical. The resources available domestically are too limited and the exogenous shocks too great for any strategy depending wholly on domestic resources to be more than problematic in results or more than excruciatingly slow in paying off (especially for its intended beneficiaries and participants). The need for real resource - including knowledge - transfers (from other developing countries as well as from industrial ones) is as great in respect to the broader as to the narrower aspects of structural adjustment.

Fourteenth, one 'resource' of which less is needed is pre-emptive or coercive advice. Imposed programmes rarely survive the crisis stick or the resource

carrot - even if they are inherently sound. Only Africans are primarily concerned about and able to achieve the development of Africa. The record of expert model solutions to African problems is - to say the least - not very good, partly at least because these models almost always lack contextual, temporal and technical knowledge Africans (often poor Africans) possess and their expert designers did not. Nowhere is this warning truer than in relation to peasant production and especially peasant food production.

Table 4. Growth of Agriculture

	Average annual growth rate of volume of production (percent)				Average annual growth rate of total production per capita (percent)			
	Food		Total agriculture		Food		Total agriculture	
	1960-70	1970-82	1960-70	1970-82	1960-70	1970-82	1960-70	1970-82
Low-income economies	3.2 w	1.0 w	3.1 w	0.7 w	1.0 w	-1.2 w	0.9 w	-1.4 w
<i>Low-income semiarid</i>	<i>2.1 w</i>	<i>2.8 w</i>	<i>2.3 w</i>	<i>2.8 w</i>	<i>-0.5 w</i>	<i>-0.1 w</i>	<i>-0.2 w</i>	<i>-0.1 w</i>
1 Chad	-0.3	2.4	0.2	2.1	-2.2	0.4	-1.7	0.1
2 Mali	1.3	2.5	1.6	2.7	-1.2	-0.2	-0.9	0.0
3 Burkina Faso	3.2	2.4	3.5	2.5	1.2	0.4	1.5	0.5
4 Somalia	2.8	1.0	2.8	1.0	0.0	-1.8	0.0	-1.8
5 Niger	2.7	4.1	2.7	4.0	-0.7	0.8	-0.7	0.7
6 Gambia, The	4.3	-1.0	4.3	-1.0	2.1	-4.1	2.1	-4.1
<i>Low-income other</i>	<i>3.3 w</i>	<i>0.9 w</i>	<i>3.2 w</i>	<i>0.6 w</i>	<i>1.2 w</i>	<i>-1.4 w</i>	<i>1.1 w</i>	<i>-1.6 w</i>
7 Ethiopia	2.9	1.7	3.0	1.5	0.5	-0.3	0.6	-0.5
8 Guinea-Bissau		0.7		0.7				
9 Zaire	4.3	1.3	4.1	1.2	2.3	-1.7	2.1	-1.7
10 Malawi	4.9	2.9	4.7	3.5	2.0	-0.1	1.8	0.5
11 Uganda	3.4	1.7	3.4	0.5	0.4	-1.0	0.4	-2.1
12 Rwanda	4.5	3.5	4.5	3.7	1.9	0.1	1.9	0.3
13 Burundi	4.6	1.6	4.6	1.7	3.2	-0.6	3.2	-0.5
14 Tanzania	5.5	2.1	5.0	1.0	2.7	-1.3	2.2	-2.3
15 Benin	3.2	2.6	3.8	2.4	0.6	-0.1	1.2	-0.3
16 Central African Rep.	0.8	1.9	1.3	1.8	-0.8	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3
17 Guinea	2.7	1.5	2.7	1.4	1.2	-0.5	1.2	-0.6
18 Madagascar	2.7	1.7	2.7	1.6	0.5	-0.9	0.5	-1.0
19 Togo	5.5	2.3	5.4	2.3	2.4	-0.3	2.3	-0.3
20 Ghana	2.6	-0.2	2.6	-0.2	0.3	-3.1	0.3	-3.1
21 Kenya	3.6	2.0	3.3	2.7	0.4	-1.9	0.1	-1.2
22 Sierra Leone	3.7	1.2	3.6	1.2	2.0	-0.8	1.9	-0.8
23 Mozambique	2.3	-1.0	2.0	-1.4	0.2	-5.1	-0.1	-5.5
Middle-income oil importers	3.7 w	3.3 w	3.8 w	2.5 w	0.7 w	-0.6 w	0.7 w	-1.2 w
24 Sudan	5.4	2.9	5.4	1.6	3.1	-0.3	3.1	-1.6
25 Mauritania	2.1	1.4	2.1	1.3	-0.2	-0.9	-0.2	-1.0
26 Liberia	0.4	3.0	3.3	2.1	-2.7	-0.5	0.1	-1.4
27 Senegal	-0.4	1.5	-0.3	1.3	-2.6	-1.2	-2.5	-1.4
28 Lesotho	0.1	0.2	0.4	-0.2	-1.9	-2.1	-1.6	-2.5
29 Zambia	3.5	1.8	3.1	1.7	0.9	-1.3	0.5	-1.4
30 Zimbabwe	1.5	1.6	0.6	2.2	-2.0	-1.6	-2.9	-1.0
31 Botswana	0.9	-2.0	0.9	-2.0	-1.7	-6.0	-1.7	-6.0
32 Swaziland	3.8	3.9	8.6	4.5	5.9	0.7	5.7	1.3
33 Ivory Coast	5.2	6.0	5.5	5.0	1.4	1.0	1.7	0.1
34 Mauritius	1.5	0.8	1.5	0.9	-0.7	-0.6	-0.7	-0.5
Middle-income oil exporters	1.1 w	2.4 w	1.1 w	2.3 w	-1.4 w	-0.3 w	-1.4 w	-0.7 w
35 Nigeria	0.5	2.5	0.4	2.4	-2.0	-0.1	-2.0	-0.2
36 Cameroon	4.6	2.1	4.8	2.0	2.5	-0.9	2.7	-1.0
37 Congo, People's Rep.	-2.8	0.9	-2.7	0.9	-5.1	-2.0	-5.0	-2.0
38 Gabon	3.3	0.7	3.3	0.6	2.9	-0.7	2.9	-0.8
39 Angola	2.8	0.4	3.0	-3.0	0.7	-2.0	0.9	-5.4
Sub-Saharan Africa	2.5 w	1.7 w	2.5 w	1.4 w	0.2 w	-0.9 w	0.2 w	-1.1 w

Note: For data comparability and coverage see the technical notes.

Source: The World Bank, Toward Sustained Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Joint Program of Action, 1984.

Notes

1. See, for example, T. Rose (Ed) 1985 Crisis and Recovery In Sub-Saharan Africa: Realities And Complexities; R. H. Green (Guest Ed.) 1985 Sub-Saharan Africa: Towards oblivion or reconstruction, No. 15 of Journal of Development Planning; 1985; P. Ndegwa, L. P. Mureithi and R. H. Green (Eds), Development Options For Africa In The 1980's and Beyond, Oxford University Press, Nairobi, 1985; World Bank, Toward Sustained Development In Sub-Saharan Africa: A Joint Programme Of Action, Washington, 1984.
2. Governors' sometimes did, by the nature of their posts, take a more territorially self contained view with some impact on territorial, but much less on overall, colonial policy.
3. A reading of a random selection of colonial bluebooks, reports, minutes and semi-analytical pieces - including Fabian ones on endeavours such as the post 1945 groundnut schemes - rapidly brings home the colonial economy in the service of the metropolitan economy focus, as opposed to African welfare or even overall territorial development, of colonial conceptualisation even when dealing with topics such as wages, employment or peasant production. Again some governors - for example, Sir Gordon Guggisberg in the Gold Coast and Lord Lugard in Nigeria - were partial exceptions even if rather technocratic and paternalistic in their approach to the welfare of Africans and conceptually shaky in their delineation of how to expand territorial production.
4. In German East Africa (Tanzania) examination of German tombstones suggests that diseases killed at least one German per mile of rail built, while West Africa's European health condition was as much described as caricatured by the tag 'The Bight of Benin where many go in; but few come out again'.
5. Unpublished Tanzania data suggest a 3 to 2 ratio of minimum wage consuming power to that of the average peasant household; scattered West African estimates include several of the same order in the mid-1970s. Much higher estimates usually compare peasant cash incomes with all urban income earners or value peasant self provisioning in food at farmgate prices and worker food at urban retail prices both of which distorts real consuming power differentials.
6. Centred on the ILO's World Employment Programme and "Basic Needs" conceptualisation (c.f. Employment, Growth and Basic Needs: A One World Problem, ILO, Geneva, 1976) and the World Bank's "Absolute Poverty" conceptualisation and projects toward its eradication.
7. In fact in most countries of Sub-Saharan Africa a fairly steady post 1970 increase in policies aimed at enhancing growth of food production backed by generally increased resource allocations have paralleled a worsening achieved output growth trend despite grower price/urban wage terms of trade shifts in favour of domestic food over most of the period. There are exceptions and it is probable that the causal relationship run from the negative output trend to the policy/resource

packages and not vice versa, but even on the most favourable reading policy was not in fact effective and resource allocations were not efficient in production payoff terms.

8. See sources cited at Note 5 especially Towards oblivion or reconstruction (contributions by S. Please and R. H. Green) and Toward Sustained Development.
9. Real wage falls of over 50 per cent since the mid-1970s are common and 75 per cent ones not uncommon. Given base levels of consumption these must have been partially offset by rises in other components of household income. Otherwise the household members would literally be unhoused, naked and starving or dead.
10. The accuracy of these data is certainly open to question. 80% averages taken literally would imply starvation was rampant among at least the bottom fifth of the food distribution and 68% would suggest half the people were in the grip of a major famine. There is some reason to believe FAO (and national) estimates in some countries understate food availability and that up to a point low height and weight represent adaptation to conditions of low food availability which do reduce minimum nutritional levels consistent with health. However, there is no reason to doubt the pattern of declining availability shown in many cases for over a decade and for almost all since the late 1970s. Equally, adaptation cannot explain the high and rising levels of clinical malnutrition in children which are based on less globalistic criteria nor explain away the very real micro and qualitative evidence of chronic inability to work hard, to study effectively, to benefit from ;health care which are reported, even under non-famine conditions, in most SSA countries.
11. Thus Northern and Upper Ghana are usually perceived as food deficit areas. In nutritional terms they most certainly are. But they are substantial net food (yams, groundnuts, cattle and to a lesser extent millet and guinea corn) exporters to the rest of Ghana and to Burkina Faso except in the most severely drought affected years because most peasant households have no alternative way of meeting basic cash purchase requirements. (The regional rice surplus is less relevant to the argument as it comes from land extensive, capital intensive, large, mechanised farms not peasant growers.)
12. Perceptions may be wrong - see, e.g Note 26 - but if acted on they do have objective results and are a real cause of decisions.
13. For a programmatic sketch see P. Daniel, M. Lipton, R. H. Green in Towards oblivion or reconstruction, op cit.
14. Higher productivity is basic - in the context of most informal sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa - to higher real incomes. Reduction of exploitation may often also be necessary, but until they are able to raise their productivity most informal sector employees/self employed cannot achieve minimum adequate household incomes no matter how fairly they are paid for what they produce.

15. Interestingly, the World Bank's variant of the 'new conventional wisdom' has never fully lost sight of this point and has recently begun to reassert it. Some of the production oriented justifications of education and health are rather distressingly formulated - they would make equal sense if the 'objects' discussed were machines or cattle - but the underlying point that the productionist case reinforces the human concern one for basic services is an important and powerful one.
16. Contexts - not the Sub-Saharan African context. For example, food stamps for poor households might be a fiscally and administratively feasible food security approach in Mauritius but pretty clearly not in - say - Mauretania. Similarly large inter year grain storage may make little sense in Botswana which is bordered by two large grain exporters and has a relatively satisfactory foreign exchange position; in Zambia both foreign exchange constraints and the need to restructure the economy away from mining point in the other direction.
17. This may be unfair to decision takers. With crop yields uncertain until harvest and the procurement/shipment time required long, it is prudent not to close down food aid (or other import) pipelines prematurely. However, the same cure of minimum grower prices and reserve stocks would fit equally well to alleviate the problems resulting from such prudence.
18. The role of better stoves is controversial. Those developed are with few exceptions so unpopular as to suggest serious design or overlooked side effect weaknesses. In any case substituting a purchased stove for three stones to save wood produced (collected) by direct labour input is not a practical prescription for poor rural households to follow.
19. The critique on the grounds of collection cost is far from radical - it is standard Treasury practitioner wisdom aggregated from experience. That on indirect costs to unpaid collectors is not one Treasuries are so prone to make, but is one they recognise and to a degree accept - precisely because their experience is that heavy collection burdens on non-Treasury institutions or enterprises result in protests, need to pay collection fees and/or very poor collection rates. Many of the detailed fee schemes proposed appear to be 'academic' or 'ideological' in the perjorative sense - it is hard to suppose their authors have any knowledge of revenue management and collection realities and on occasion charging the user seems to be the goal in and of itself whether the net revenue secured is substantial, negligible or even negative. Perhaps the author is biased because for nine years he was a practising Treasury civil servant responsible inter alia for devising administratively feasible and cost efficient revenue measures and structures.

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